IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-19 without prejudice or disclaimer, and substitute new claims 20-38 therefor as follows:

Claims 1-19 (Cancelled).

20. (New) A process for manufacturing an electric cable, comprising the steps of:

feeding a conductor at a predetermined feeding speed;

extruding a thermoplastic insulating layer in a position radially external to the conductor;

cooling the extruded insulating layer;

forming a circumferentially closed metal shield around said extruded insulating layer;

the time occurring between the end of the cooling step and the beginning of the shield forming step being inversely proportional to the feeding speed of the conductor.

21. (New) The process according to claim 20, wherein the step of forming comprises the step of longitudinally folding a metal sheet around said extruded insulating layer.

22. (New) The process according to claim 21, wherein the step of forming comprises the step of overlapping the edges of said metal sheet to form the metal shield.

23. (New) The process according to claim 21, wherein the step of forming comprises the step of bonding the edges of said metal sheet to form the metal shield.

24. (New) The process according to claim 20, further comprising the step of supplying the conductor in the form of a metal rod.

25. (New) The process according to claim 20, further comprising the step of applying a primer layer around the metal shield.

26. (New) the process according to claim 25, wherein the step of applying the primer layer is carried out by extrusion.

27. (New) The process according to claim 20, further comprising the step of applying an impact protecting element around said circumferentially closed metal shield.

28. (New) The process according to claim 27 wherein the step of applying an impact protecting element comprises the step of applying a non-expanded polymeric layer around said metal shield.

29. (New) The process according to claim 27, wherein the step of applying an impact protecting element comprises the step of applying an expanded polymeric layer.

30. (New) The process according to claim 29, wherein the expanded polymeric layer is applied around a non-expanded polymeric layer.

31. (New) The process according to claim 20, further comprising the step of applying an oversheath around the metal shield.

32. (New) The process according to claim 31, wherein the oversheath is applied around an expanded polymeric layer.

33. (New) The process according to claim 20, wherein the step of cooling the extruded insulating layer is carried out by longitudinally feeding the conductor with the thermoplastic insulating layer through an elongated cooling device.

34. (New) The process according to claim 20, wherein the thermoplastic polymer material of the insulating layer is selected from: polyolefins, copolymers of different olefins, copolymers of an olefin with an ethylenically unsaturated ester, polyesters, polyacetates, cellulose polymers, polycarbonates, polysulphones, phenol resins, urea resins, polyketones, polyacrylates, polyamides, polyamines, and mixtures thereof.

35. (New) The process according to claim 24 wherein said thermoplastic polymer material is selected from: polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP), ethylene/vinyl acetate (EVA), ethylene/methyl acrylate (EMA), ethylene/ethyl acrylate (EEA), ethylene/butyl acrylate (EBA), ethylene/α-olefin thermoplastic copolymers, polystyrene, acrylonitrile/butadiene/styrene (ABS) resins, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyurethane, polyamides, polyethylene terephthalate (PET), polybutylene terepthalate (PBT), and copolymers thereof or mechanical mixtures thereof.

36. (New) The process according to claim 20, wherein the thermoplastic polymer material of the insulating layer includes a predetermined amount of a dielectric liquid.

37. (New) An electrical cable comprising:

a conductor;

a thermoplastic insulating layer radially external to the conductor;

at least one expanded polymeric layer around said insulating layer;

a circumferentially closed metal shield around said insulating layer; and

an impact protecting element in a position radially external to the metal shield, said impact protecting element comprising at least one non-expanded polymeric layer

around said metal shield and at least one expanded polymeric layer radially external to said non-expanded polymeric layer.

38. (New) The electrical cable according to claim 37, wherein the thickness of the expanded polymeric layer is from 1 to 2 times the thickness of the non-expanded polymeric layer.